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Article *in* Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal · December 2020

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Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.7, No.12
Publication Date: December 25, 2020
DOI:10.14738/assrj.712.9497.
Katzarska-Miller, I, Faucher, F., Kramer, & Reysen, S. (2020). Lay Definitions of Cultural Appropriation in U.S. Community and College Student Samples. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 7(12)* 580-598

Lay Definitions of Cultural Appropriation in U.S. Community and College Student Samples

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ABSTRACT

In three studies we examined lay definitions of cultural appropriation in U.S. community and college student samples. In a fourth study we examined correlates of perceptions of cultural appropriation. Using community and undergraduate student samples (Studies 1-2), and popular media articles (Study 3) we examined definitions of cultural appropriation following Rogers' (2006) typology of cultural exchange, dominance, and subordination. The results across three studies revealed that cultural appropriation was defined predominantly as cultural exploitation. In Study 4 we examined political correctness (emotion and activism), social justice, empathy (perspective taking and empathic concern), and political orientation as correlates of cultural appropriation perceptions. Using canonical correlations, we found that cultural exploitation was the primary contributor to the synthetic predictor, and political orientation, emotion political correctness, activism political correctness, and social justice made significant contributions to the criterion variable, but not empathy. Implication and further research directions are discussed.

Keywords: cultural appropriation, political orientation, political correctness, activism, social justice

LAY DEFINITIONS OF CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN U.S. COMMUNITY AND COLLEGE STUDENT SAMPLES

The term cultural appropriation has been defined in numerous ways, presenting a range and complexity of terminology across different academic realms. While some define cultural appropriation in a neutral way, there are a variety of conceptualizations that are moralistic or morally objectionable (Büyükokutan, 2011; Matthews, 2016). Young's (2005) description of cultural appropriation as "the common feature…is the taking of something produced by members of one culture by members of another" (p. 136) is an example of morally neutral definition, while Han's (2019) description of "when people within a dominant culture use objects from another culture without thorough research, and remain ignorant of the cultural context, cultural appropriation takes place" (p. 9) is an example of appropriation being defined as morally objectionable. In contemporary discourse cultural appropriation has negative connotations, suggesting that there is a power differential between the appropriator and the group they are appropriating from; appropriation is done usually without the consent of the group that is being appropriated from; and that there is a degree of harm and/or offense to the group that is being appropriated from (Gottlieb, 2017). As Gottlieb (2017) points out although these features are not usually part of the definitions, and may not be evident in every case of appropriation, they are generally perceived as the defining features of cultural appropriation. For example, in literature this occurs when writers belonging to a dominant group appropriate the stories of subordinate groups, often indigenous people living in colonized nations, with an incomplete understanding of a story's historical or religious significance (Hladki, 1994). Similar issues arise in visual arts, such as the adoption of the Maori koru motif by White artists and corporations like Air New Zealand (Shand, 2002). Other examples include the co-opting of indigenous religion for the purposes of entertainment or seeking novelty, such as ayahuasca's increasing popularity as a recreational drug (Tupper, 2009), and the use of AAVE by non-Black rappers to signify their authenticity and membership in hip-hop culture (Alvarez, 2015).

In the current paper, after an overview of the types of cultural appropriation as well as potential correlates of cultural appropriation, we present three studies that examine lay definitions of cultural appropriation in U.S. community and college student samples, and a study examining several correlates of cultural appropriation perceptions. In the discussion section, we address our findings, and based on current theorizing of cultural appropriation we propose some future directions for empirical research on the topic.

Types of Cultural Appropriation

Richard Rogers (2006) separates cultural appropriation into four main categories. When defining each category, Rogers takes into account power, social structure, and the intentions behind the act among a number of other factors. The categories of cultural appropriation outlined by Rogers are cultural exchange, cultural dominance, cultural exploitation, and transculturation. Each of these categories exhibits a form of cultural appropriation with different implications and varying effects.

Cultural exchange includes the mutual and balanced sharing and giving of items, symbols, beliefs, and rituals between cultures of equal power and status. It can be manifested in a number of ways through the sharing of language, religious aspects, and through forms of art, however, it is dependent upon the equal sharing between the two cultures. Cultural exchange serves as a standard for the interactions between cultures as it is a mutual and balanced act. *Cultural dominance* is

evident when a dominant culture imposes or forces their culture onto that of a subordinate culture. It serves to erase parts of or the entirety of a culture by implementing strategies or imposing aspects of their own culture onto that of a subordinate culture. The most notable example of cultural dominance is seen in the boarding school system that Native American children were forced into in the 19th and 20th century. *Cultural exploitation* is the taking of subordinate culture by the dominant group, which most often occurs without permission and with nothing given in return. It often occurs in situations through the misuse of symbols, artifacts, and clothing. The fourth type, *transculturation,* involves aspects of multiple cultures being put together and creating one element, which creates the impossibility of defining what culture an item originated from. An example of transculturation is the production of "hybrid" Hopi kachina dolls made by traditional Native artists but using non-traditional materials.

As already mentioned above many conceptualizations of cultural appropriation across academic disciplines appear to refer to *cultural exploitation* as the dominant form of appropriation (Gottlieb, 2017), although concrete definitions are predominantly phrased as cultural exchange. A question that, to our knowledge, has not been addressed empirically is how lay people define and perceive cultural appropriation. Do they see it more along the lines of cultural exchange, or do they take powered social relation dynamics into consideration when labeling an occurrence as cultural appropriation. The current research attempts to provide an empirical answer to this question.

Possible Correlates

A follow-up question is what characteristics, values, and beliefs may influence the extent to which people define cultural appropriation in a particular way? Prior (2019) argued that cultural appropriation is related to the concept of identity politics, which is a term encompassing an array of political activities and theoretical analyses embedded in experiences of injustice shared by members of often marginalized social groups. The element of power and oppression that is part of many definitions of cultural appropriation is the connective tissue to other elements of identity politics. Some of these elements include political correctness (Spencer, 1994), social justice concerns (Lister, 2008), and liberalism (Heyes, 2017).

Political Correctness

Rosenblum et al. (2019) argue that contemporary definitions of the term political correctness (PC) involve two components. One is the use of language or actions that minimize offensiveness or conform to specific social norms and the other is the use of strategies intended to help marginalized groups. Several scales measuring PC have been created providing some insights into its relationship to political ideology and individual differences. Across two studies social dominance orientation (SDO) was negatively associated with concern for PC (Dickinson, 2017; Strauts & Blanton, 2016). Right wing authoritarianism (RWA) has shown mixed results. Strauts and Blanton (2016) found that the relationship between concern for politically correct language and RWA was not consistent, while Dickinson (2017) found that PC was negatively correlated only to the aggression and submission dimensions of RWA. Although PC is perceived as a leftist value, the relationship between PC and liberal orientation does not seem to be as straightforward. For example, Strauts and Blanton's (2016) measure of concern for political correctness scale (CPC) consisted of two subscales: an emotional subscale (negative emotional response to politically incorrect speech) and activism subscale (motivation to correct those using politically incorrect speech). Correlational analyses revealed differences between the two subscales. It was the activism subscale that was

more predictive of liberal and activist identity. Dickinson's (2017) measure of assessing the attitude components of PC indirectly through language preference for PC words surprisingly did not correlate with liberal political orientation. Research on PC and individual differences has found gender and group membership effects, such as women being more politically correct than men (Lalonde et al., 2000) and members of oppressed groups being more politically correct when the PC group is relevant to them (Barker, 1994). The above findings indicate that PC has some connection to liberal orientation as well as concepts (such as SDO) that are associated with particular ideology (liberalism is associated with lower SDO). Similarly members of groups lower in the social hierarchy are more likely to be concerned with PC language.

Political Orientation

Research has demonstrated that liberal and conservative political orientation is associated with many beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in divergent ways. According to moral foundations theory, liberals are more likely than conservatives to prioritize principles of *fairness* and avoidance of *harm*, whereas conservative are more likely than liberals to also take into consideration *intergroup loyalty*, *authority,* and *purity* when making moral judgments (e.g., Graham et al., 2009). Although moral foundations theory argues that all five foundations are equally valid ways of being moral, what has been characterized as social justice-oriented concerns, are along the lines of the two factors prioritized by liberals. Thus, a significant body of research has demonstrated the positive association between liberal political orientation and lower levels of prejudice toward marginalized groups (e.g., LGBTQ, Black people) (Webster et al., 2011; Whitley & Kite, 2010), lower endorsement of ideologies that justify social inequality (i.e., SDO, RWA, system justification) (Jost et al., 2003; Wilson & Subley, 2013), and experiences in diverse environments and social activism (Pascarelle et al., 2012). For example, Bierbrauer and Klinger (2002) found that conservatives showed significantly less concern for the justice of immigrants and others who were not a part of their group than did liberals. The relationship between liberal orientation and support for marginalized groups suggests that cultural appropriation will be more likely to be seen as problematic (i.e., cultural exploitation) by people with liberal political orientation.

Social Justice Concerns

Social justice has been defined in multiple ways. Torres-Harding et al. (2012) argue that many of these definitions view social justice as a value or belief centered on the notion of equitable access to resources and human rights protection. Additionally, the concept of power is involved, such as social inequalities should be minimized and marginalized groups should be empowered. In practice social justice promotes changing structures and institutions that perpetuate inequality among groups, as well as self-examination and awareness of how one perpetuates systems of oppression. As already mentioned in the above section on political orientation, social justice is seen as one of the core aspects associated with liberal political orientation. Many of the positive associations between liberal political orientation and attitudes towards various groups and inequity hold for social justice concerns as well.

Empathy

Although empathy is not a characteristic associated with identity politics, an extensive body of research shows the empathy is associated with cooperation, helping, and moral thoughts and actions (Batson, 2010; Zake, 2016). However, empathy has also been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Two of these ways are perspective taking (putting oneself in another person's shoes) and

empathic concern (concern for the welfare of others) (Jordan et al., 2016). Research has shown that both of these conceptualization have been positively related to observer justice sensitivity (being aware of an unfair event but not directly involved in it) (Schmitt et al., 2005), support for human rights (McFarland & Mathews, 2005), lower prejudice (Johnson et al., 1997) and more positive attitudes toward marginalized groups (Vescio et al., 2003). Similarly, McFarland (2010) found that empathy was negatively related to generalized prejudice. These findings suggest that empathy, at least defined as perspective taking and empathic concern, can be associated with cultural appropriation, especially when cultural appropriation is seen as manifestation of powered relationships (i.e., cultural exploitation). Harming a marginalized group may evoke perceptions of injustice. Awareness and feelings of perceived injustice mediates reduction on prejudice (Dovidio et al., 2008).

OVERVIEW OF PRESENT RESEARCH

The purpose of the current studies was to explore whether lay definitions of cultural appropriation correspond to how the term has been conceptualized theoretically (Studies 1-3) and what are the correlates of the lay conceptualizations of cultural appropriation. In the first two studies we asked community (Mechanical Turk) and undergraduate student samples to define cultural appropriation and provide examples. In Study 3 we examined popular media coverage of cultural appropriation and its conceptualization. We used Rogers' (2006) typology of cultural appropriation: cultural exchange, cultural dominance, and cultural exploitation. Rogers offers a fourth type, transculturation, but due to its complicated nature and difficulty of operationalization, we only examined the definitions for the first three types. We hypothesized that participants will define cultural appropriation primarily as cultural exploitation. However, mimicking academic definitions of cultural appropriation we suspect that many participants may not explicitly use in their definitions words related to powered relationships, thus obscuring the explicit characterization of their definitions as exploitation. In order to demonstrate that implicitly exploitation is how the appropriation is being conceived, we also predict that the majority of examples participants provide will be of dominant groups and group members appropriating practices and artifacts from marginalized groups.

Study 4 utilized undergraduate students to examine correlates of how cultural appropriation is defined. Participants indicated the extent that they perceive events (e.g., "A sport team using a Native American as their mascot") reflecting the three types of appropriation (exploitation, exchange, dominance) as cultural appropriation and completed measures concerning political orientation, political correctness (emotion and activism) (Strauts & Blanton, 2015), social justice concern (Torres-Harding et al., 2012), and empathy (perspective taking and empathic concern) (Davis, 1983). We hypothesized that these variables will be positively associated with defining cultural appropriation as cultural exploitation, but not cultural exchange or cultural dominance.

STUDY 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine how a U.S. community sample of lay people defines cultural appropriation and what examples they give of it. We predicted that the majority of participants would define cultural appropriation predominantly as cultural exploitation, and that would be primarily revealed in the examples that participants provide for cultural appropriation.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk and received a monetary payment for their participation. One hundred and five participants completed the survey but the final analyses were based on 61 (53.3% men, 1.7% did not indicate gender, age range 19-70, M_{age} = 36.87, SD = 11.66). Participants indicated their racial identity as European American (65%), African American (13.3%), Native American (1.7%), Asian American (6.7%), Latinx (3.3%), and Multiracial (3.3%). Participants were asked to answer two questions, "In your own words, please describe/define the concept of cultural appropriation," and "Please provide an example of cultural appropriation," as well as demographics. Four participants were excluded because they copied the Wikipedia definition of cultural appropriation, and one because of racist content. Of the remaining 100 participants, 39 indicated that they did not know what cultural appropriation is and provided no examples, and thus were excluded from the final analysis.[1]

Two independent coders coded the definition along three of the four dimensions by Rogers (2006), exchange, dominance, and exploitation, as well as content on power and social status of the group engaging in appropriation. Exchange (reciprocal exchange between cultures), dominance (elements of the dominant culture used by the subordinated culture), and exploitation (elements of the subordinated culture used by the dominant culture) had high inter-rater agreement, 100%, 95% and 97% (K = .70) respectively. In order for an item to be coded as exchange, the definition had to specify that the exchange is reciprocal; for dominance to mention specifically that elements of dominant culture are used by subordinated cultures in general or a specific subordinated one; for exploitation to explicitly mention that the dominant culture (e.g., White) is taking from marginalized cultures in general or a specific one (see examples in Table 2). Definitions that did not contain explicit labeling of cultures as dominant or subordinate (or associated synonyms used such as White people or minorities) were not classified under any of the three categories. For example, the response "When you take parts of another culture for yourself" was not classified under any of the three categories because it is not clear whether the person doing the taking is a member of a dominant or an oppressed group, as well as the "another culture" is the domain or a subordinated culture.

Similarly for power (social power being mentioned) and status (references to dominant and subordinated groups) definitions were coded in these categories only if the word "power" was explicitly used, and the groups were labeled as dominant and subordinated (see Table 2 for examples). The agreement for power and status respectively was 99% and 92% (K = .90). The examples of cultural appropriation were coded for whether the appropriator was a dominant or subordinated group member, or there was no mention of group membership (K = .69, 92% agreement).[2] A third independent coder resolved any discrepancies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We conducted frequencies on the coded variables (Table 1). The results indicated that participants were more likely to provide definitions of cultural appropriation as elements of subordinated culture being taken by dominant group members (exploitation) than defining it as exchange or dominance. Participants also were not very likely to explicitly incorporate in their definitions mentions of power or status dynamics. Even though in the exploitation category the percentage was relatively small, the appropriator category based on the examples of cultural appropriation that participants provided revealed that this was the implicit understanding that they had. In other

words, although the majority of participants might have not explicitly mentioned in their definition that a dominant culture is doing the appropriation in the examples that they provided it was clear that that was the case.

STUDY 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate the findings from Study 1 using a U.S. undergraduate student sample. We predicted, as in Study 1, the majority of participants would define cultural appropriation predominantly as cultural exploitation, and that would be primarily revealed in the examples that participants provided for cultural appropriation.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were Transylvania University students (N = 330) who were recruited from classes spanning various disciplines. No incentives were offered for completion of the survey. The final analysis was based on 280 participants (71.8% women, 0.5% did not indicate gender, M_{age} = 19.58, SD = 1.28). Participants indicated their racial identity as European American (81.8%), African American (1.8%), Asian American (2.7%), Latinx (0.5%), Arab American (5.5%) and Multiracial (0.5%). Participants were asked to answer two questions, "In your own words, please describe/define the concept of cultural appropriation," and "Please provide an example of cultural appropriation." Fifty participants were initially removed due to lack of responses or legibility of the answers.[3] Two independent coders coded the definitions for whether the definition touched upon cultural appropriation or not (K = .77). The two coders resolved any disagreement. The definitions of 60 participants were not related to cultural appropriation, thus they were excluded from the final analyses.

Two independent coders coded the definitions and the examples using the same categories as Study 1. The inter-rater agreement was high for all of the categories: exchange (K = .53), dominance (K = .21),[4] exploitation (K = .89), power (K = .72), status (K = .76), and appropriator (K = .66). The two coders together resolved any discrepancies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We conducted frequencies on the coded variables (Table 1). The results replicated the findings from Study 1. Overall, participants were more likely to define cultural appropriation as exploitation than exchange or dominance. The explicit mentioning of social power and status was also relatively low. Even though many of the definitions did not indicate which group (dominant or subordinated) did the appropriation, the examples provided by participants showed strong support for an implicit understanding of appropriation as being done by dominant group members.

STUDY 3

The purpose of Study 3 was to examine how popular media coverage of cultural appropriation conceptualizes the concept. The framework of mutual constitution (Adams & Markus, 2004) suggests that there is a dialectical relationship between the cultural spaces that one occupies and their psychological processes and experiences. The first half of the relationship (i.e., cultural impact on individuals) suggests that psychological experience is culturally grounded in that it affords particular cultural patterns that provide scaffolding of individual experiences. The second half of the relationship (i.e., individual's impact on culture) suggests that individuals select cultural patterns that they reproduce, modify, or reject through their everyday actions. Although in this

study we are not directly testing the impact of how cultural appropriation discussion in popular media influences individuals' definitions of cultural appropriation, based on the mutual constitution framework, one can argue that how cultural appropriation is defined in popular culture would impact lay definitions of it. We predicted that cultural appropriation would be predominantly defined as cultural exploitation.

Procedure

We used Google News to collect articles featuring cultural appropriation. On Nov. 29, 2019 the term "cultural appropriation" was put into a Google News search. All of the 71 articles that were featured that day were used for data analysis. The articles ranged from comprehensive coverage of cultural appropriation and coverage of events that were perceived by the public as cultural appropriation (e.g., a student backlash against a college campaign for cultural sensitivity regarding Halloween costumes) to fashion and celebrities engaging in appropriation. All of the articles were written in English, and the majority of were U.S. based sources. Eleven of the articles (15.5%) were critical of cultural appropriation as a concept (e.g., a political correctness artifact), while 60 (84.5%) problematized the practice of cultural appropriation. Two independent coders coded for the three categories of exchange, dominance, and exploitation as operationalized in Studies 1 and 2, as well as the group membership of the appropriator (e.g., dominant, subordinated, or not mentioned). A third independent coder resolved any disagreement. The inter-rater agreement on all of the categories was high: exchange (92%, K = .53), dominance (94%, K = .30), exploitation (89%, K = .57), and appropriator (94%, K = .90).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We conducted frequencies on the coded variables (Table 1). The results indicated that news articles related to cultural appropriation conceptualized it predominantly in terms of exploitation where a dominant group member took artifacts and practices from oppressed groups. This was demonstrated both by the high number of articles coded as exploitation, as well as the number of articles featuring the appropriators being members of a dominant group (i.e., White). Across the first three studies, cultural appropriation appears to be understood by lay public and media as exploitation. We constructed a fourth study to examine which individual difference variables are related to perceptions of cultural appropriation with examples from the three categories.

STUDY 4

As noted in the introduction, although there is no empirical research on what beliefs and values are more likely to make people perceive cultural appropriation as a function of power relationships between groups, and thus perceive it as cultural exploitation. However, we speculated that variables associated with identity politics may be associated with perceptions of cultural appropriation. The previous three studies demonstrated that lay people and popular media conceptualize appropriation predominantly in terms of cultural exploitation. This reveals a level of recognition of powered social relationship, thus we examined whether beliefs, values, and attitudes related to liberal political orientation, political correctness, social justice concern, and empathy would be associated with perceptions of cultural appropriation as cultural exploitation. We hypothesized that all of the variables would be positively associated with cultural appropriation perception as exploitation.

Participants and Procedure

Participants (N = 232, 75% women, M_{age} = 21.59, SD = 5.65) were undergraduate students from three institutions: Transylvania University (in Kentucky), Utah Valley University, and Texas A&M University-Commerce. All participants received course credit for their participation. Participants indicated their racial category as White (57.3%), Black (18.1%), Native American (0.4%), Asian American (2.6%), Latinx (14.2%), Arab American (1.3%), Indian (1.3%), multiracial (5.2%), and other (0.9%). Participants completed measures regarding cultural appropriation, concern for political correctness, social justice, empathy, political orientation, and demographic items.

Measures

Cultural Appropriation

Twenty-four items measured perceptions of cultural appropriation. The items covered the three types of appropriation proposed Rogers (2006): exchange (e.g., "Japanese people watching U.S. action films, while Americans watching anime," 5 items, α = .95), dominance (e.g., "Sending Native American children to boarding schools, in the United States in the late 19th century, in order to assimilate to the White dominant culture," 10 items, α = .78), and exploitation (e.g., "White women wearing traditionally Black hairstyles (e.g., afro, cornrows, dreadlocks," 9 items, α = .85). The measure used a 7-point Likert-type response scale from 1 = *definitely not cultural appropriation* to 7 = *definitely cultural appropriation*. Participants were not told the three types or even if the items given were cultural appropriation. Their only instruction was to rate their perceptions of whether or not the item constituted cultural appropriation.

Political Correctness

We included a 9-item measure adopted from Strauts and Blanton (2015) to assess individual differences in concerns for politically correct speech. The measure used 7-point Likert-type response scale from 1 = *disagree extremely* to 7 = *agree extremely*. The two subscales of the measure were emotion (e.g., "I get anxious when I hear someone use politically incorrect language," 4 items, α = .94), which measures to emotional response to hearing politically incorrect speech, and activism (e.g., "When a person uses politically incorrect words, I point it out to them to help educate them about the issues, " 5 items, α = .94), which assesses willingness to correct others when using politically incorrect language.

Social Justice

We included an 11-item measure adopted from Torres-Harding et al. (2012). The Social Justice Attitudes subscale of the Social Justice Scale (e.g., "I believe that it is important to make sure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups," α = .97) assesses participants' endorsement of social justice values. The measure used 7-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Empathy

Two subscales from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983)—perspective taking (e.g., "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision," 7 items, α = .74) and empathic concern (e.g., "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me," 7 items, α = .82)—were used to assessed participants' interest in taking the perspective of others

and focusing on the feelings of others. The measure used 7-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Political Orientation

Political orientation was assessed with one item ("Politically I would say I am…") on a scale from 1 = *very conservative* to 7 = *very liberal*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine differences between mean ratings of the three types of cultural appropriation we conducted a repeated-measures ANOVA (see Table 3 for means). The results suggested the means were different, Wilks' $\Lambda = .83$, $F(2, 230) = 23.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .167$. Paired samples t-tests showed that exploitation was significantly higher than dominance, $t(231) = 5.42$, $p < .001$, $d = .36$, and exchange, $t(231) = 6.09$, $p < .001$, $d = .40$. Furthermore, dominance was significantly higher than exchange, $t(231) = 3.12$, $p = .002$, $d = .20$. Thus, participants viewed exploitation as most reflecting cultural appropriation.[5]

We next examined correlations between the assessed variables. As shown in Table 3, the three types of cultural appropriation were positively significantly correlated with each other. In other words, viewing cultural appropriation as exploitation was related to viewing it as exchange and dominance as well. However, the different types were associated differently with the other measured variables. Viewing cultural appropriation as exchange was related to more conservative political orientation, but not significantly related to the other variables. Viewing cultural appropriation as domination was not significantly related to any of the variables. Viewing cultural appropriation as exploitation was positively related to a liberal political orientation, emotion political correctness, activism political correctness, and social justice, but not statistically significantly related to perspective taking or empathy. Additionally, the means showed that participants perceived exploitation as cultural appropriation more than examples of domination and exchange.

To examine canonical correlations exchange, dominance, and exploitation were used as predictors of the variables assessed (e.g., political orientation, social justice, empathy) following suggestions by Sherry and Henson (2005). The analysis showed three functions with squared canonical correlations of .25, .03, and .02. The full model was statistically significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .71$, $F(18, 631) = 4.48$, $p < .001$. However, functions 2 to 3, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(10, 448) = 1.09$, $p = .368$, and 3 to 3, Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$, $F(4, 225) = 1.12$, $p = .349$, were not significant. Thus, functions 2 and 3 did not explain a statistically significant amount of shared variance between the two sets of variables. We present the first function because only that function explained a meaningful amount of variance in the variable sets (see Table 4 for standardized coefficients and structure coefficients). For the first function, the relevant criterion variables were primarily political orientation, with emotion political correctness, activism political correctness, and social justice having made secondary contributions to the synthetic criterion variable. Exploitation cultural appropriation was the primary predictor to the synthetic variable.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the present studies we examined lay definitions of cultural appropriation, as well as correlates of perceptions of cultural appropriation in U.S. community and college student samples. As hypothesized, we found that community members (Study 1) and undergraduate college students (Study 2), as well as popular media coverage (Study 3) defined cultural appropriation

predominantly as cultural exploitation, where dominant group members appropriate artifacts and practices associated with specific marginalized groups. In terms of variables associated with perception of cultural appropriation as exploitation (Study 4), we found that political correctness, liberal political ideology, and social justice concern were associated with exploitation perception, while empathy was not.

Lay definitions of cultural appropriation in our samples, appear to mimic the theoretical definitions, where oftentimes the powered relationships between the groups that the appropriation occurs are taken into consideration. In both lay and academic theorizing the explicit definition of cultural appropriation may read more as cultural exchange, or asymmetrical borrowing without a clear statement of whether the appropriation is done by a dominant or marginalized group. However, in the examples that our participants provided, as well as that covered in popular media, the perceptions of cultural appropriation as exploitation was consistently observed. Our results are consistent with the framework of the mutual constitution of culture and psychological functioning (Adams & Markus, 2004) where psychological experience is culturally constituted in that individuals inhabit socially constructed worlds that afford particular cultural patterns. In this case people's understanding of cultural appropriation is created via its conceptualization in the broader cultural space including media. In effect, cultural appropriation is described in media as exploitation and we find that lay individuals also describe cultural appropriation as exploitation.

Although Rogers (2006) is one of the few that propose different types of cultural appropriation (see Young (2005) for a different typology), the majority of the theorizing centers on the Roger's category of cultural exploitation, where powered social relationships are taken into consideration. Thus, an act of cultural appropriation in contemporary U.S. society is one where dominant group members "borrow" from marginalized groups. And as demonstrated by the results in the present studies, this is the dominant perception of cultural appropriation that lay people in our samples also have. One implication of this is that many people recognize that social groups are positioned vertically in terms of power. Because of that there is a realization that the taking of cultural artifacts and practices from oppressed groups by dominant groups has different consequences than when the reverse is present.

Examining the other two types proposed by Rogers (2006), cultural exchange is equivalent to the term cultural appreciation used in popular culture. Interestingly in Study 4, perceptions of cultural appropriation as exchange was correlated with a more conservative political orientation, suggesting a relationship between a more conservative orientation and likelihood of wanting to see cultural appropriation events in more positive terms (as appreciation rather than "taking without permission"). Although, the present results revealed an overall lack of defining cultural appropriation as dominance (when a dominant culture imposes or forces their culture onto that of an oppressed culture), it is important to note that there are two different ways in which dominance can be conceptualized. One is the taking of an artifact or practice from the dominant culture by a subordinate culture, and the other is the dominant culture imposing particular practice or artifact on a subordinated group. For example, a Black family opening a hamburger restaurant is the former, while a Black woman straightening her hair to have more work opportunities is the latter. Whether these two are perceived as conceptually different is an empirical question.

The variables that we found to be associated with perceptions of cultural appropriation as cultural exploitation were political correctness, political orientation, and social justice concern, but not empathy. Political orientation accounted for the majority of the variance in the synthetic predictor variable. The lack of association between cultural appropriation and empathy is surprising, since previous research has demonstrated a positive relationship between liberalism and empathy (Iyer et al., 2012: Schieman et al., 2019), social justice and empathy (Pedwell, 2012; Segal, 2011), openness to diversity and empathy (Gerson & Neilson, 2014), as well as prejudice reduction and empathy (Vescio, 2003). In Study 4 we also found positive significant relationships between empathic concern and liberal political orientation, the emotion subscale of political correctness, and social justice. Perspective taking was only significantly positively correlated with social justice concern. There is research that demonstrates that there is no difference in lack of capacity and willingness to empathize between liberals and conservatives, the target of empathy might differ. For example, Waytz et al. (2016) found that liberals tended to express empathy to a greater degree toward larger social groups and conservatives toward smaller groups. The larger (vs. smaller) groups are conceptualized as friends (vs. family), world (vs. nation), and humans (vs. nonhumans). Even if that is the case and cultural appropriation perception of exploitation might evoke a different degree of empathy based on one's political beliefs, it still does not explain the lack of positive association with empathy in general. Another possible explanation could be that empathy is a function of the care dimension of Moral Foundation Theory. Since both conservatives and liberals endorse the care dimension, empathy might not to correlate with a specific political orientation and its related views. Maybe conservative beliefs regarding the dimensions of authority and loyalty mitigate the amount of empathy shown to out-groups specifically, similar to other high SDO groups and ideologies. Another possible explanation is related to the nature of empathy and its measurement. Since empathy is conceptualized as having state and trait, as well as and cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Cuff et al., 2016), the scale that we have used does not capture all of these elements. Further research may explore in more detail the lack of relationship between empathy and perceptions of cultural appropriation, while taking into consideration the positive association of empathy with the other correlates.

Before delving into some suggestions for future empirical research, we need to acknowledge some limitations to the current studies. First, all of our participants were residents of the United States, which could mean that the current results are culture specific. For example, the concept of cultural appropriation may not exist across different cultural spaces, and if it does, its meaning can be different than the one used in the United States. Similar to the first limitation, is that the majority of participants were White (members of a dominant group), which may have implications for how members of dominant (vs. oppressed) groups see cultural appropriation. Although participants in Study 1 varied in age, participants in Study 2 and 4 were undergraduate college students who tend to be younger, which could have impacted the findings. More research with diverse samples can provide insight into the extent to which these findings are generalizable to other populations.

Since Study 1 was conducted online, participants may have consulted a dictionary to come up with a definition of cultural appropriation. However, the results are similar to Study 2, where participants completed the study on paper in class, we are inclined to conclude that might not have been the case. For Study 3 the content of the articles collected from Google News might have been impacted by Google News' algorithms such as it provided us with the most popular articles on the subject, thus impacting the findings. For Study 4, our participants were undergraduate students and

although they were from three different universities, which varied in terms of location and size, on average they all share specific characteristics that are associated with undergraduate samples (e.g., White, young) that may impact our results. Lastly, for Study 4 the items assessing the three types of appropriation were created based on examples provided in academic papers, popular media, and the examples provided by participants in Studies 1 and 2. Although the internal reliability for each category was high, the measure is not a validated measure or one used previously in empirical research. Furthermore, since the majority of our measures utilized in Study 4 used the same scale of measurement, the associations may be skewed due to common methods variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

An overview of the conceptualization of cultural appropriation in the academic literature brings up several other interesting issues that may be fruitful for empirical investigation. One is the issue of the role of context in both the meaning of the appropriation, as well as the loss of a cultural practice and artifact's original significance when appropriated. Regarding the former, the context in which a practice or an artifact is appropriated can impact the perception and thus the meaning of the appropriation. For example, Suh et al. (2016) demonstrated that cultural appropriation of the Korean Wave (e.g., K-pop, TV dramas) by other national groups is associated with more positive attitudes toward the country of origin. However, one outcome of introducing cultural goods to a larger audience, can lead to their originating contexts to be trivialized or altogether ignored, which makes it easier for these goods to be consumed by a global audience. This trend can be seen in the development of anime art styles in Japan. As anime was exported to non-Japanese cultures, artists began to incorporate fewer elements that coded the shows as a Japanese cultural product by designing characters with exaggerated Western features such as large eyes and a variety of hair colors not typically seen in Japan (Norris, 2003). The dialogue for these shows is frequently dubbed over into new languages, distancing anime from its Japanese origins even further. The issue of decontextualization is not limited to the arts however. Instances of appropriation include the incorporation of meditation and other mindfulness practices from Buddhism into clinical psychology (Surmitis & Guttierez, 2018). By introducing meditation as a treatment for psychological distress, mindfulness counselors and other practitioners tend to ignore the origins of meditation as a spiritual practice, turning it into a medical treatment to be commodified and sold, rather than a facet of a complex religious tradition. Based on this, future researchers may explore the extent to which cultural appropriation is seen as being harmful to the group that is being appropriated from. Furthermore, this will provide an opportunity to study conceptions of appropriation held specifically by oppressed groups, and would be a good counterbalance to the overwhelmingly White, young, and college-educated demographics of the majority of psychological research.

Another, a bit more philosophical and legal issue, is related to the debate over who "owns" a cultural identity, or if it is even possible for people to claim ownership over culture. Young and Haley (2009) use the terms insiders and outsiders to describe members of a culture and members of different cultures respectively. They argue that media produced by insiders is more authentic, but outsiders still reserve the right to appropriate cultural subjects. Others approach this question with more nuance, suggesting that the power dynamics between insiders and outsiders need to be taken into account to determine whether an act of appropriation is harmful, beneficial, or neutral. Thus, future research may investigate lay perceptions of the criteria for what constitutes a claim on a cultural artifact and practice, as well as where these ideas of ownership originate. For example, would

interdependent (i.e., collectivist) and independent (i.e., individualist) cultural spaces have different attitudes about claims of cultural ownership?

To conclude, we found empirical support that people are more likely to define cultural appropriation as exploitation taking powered social relationships into consideration albeit more implicitly as seen in the examples that they provided, than explicitly mentioning power in their definitions. Furthermore, we found that a non-exclusive cluster of variables associated with identity politics such as liberalism, political correctness, and social justice concern were positively associated with participants seeing cultural appropriation as exploitation. Since there is a lack of empirical research on cultural appropriation, there are multiple questions and aspects of the concept that further research can, and should, address.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] To examine predictors of whether participants indicated knowing or not knowing the definition of cultural appropriation in Study 1, we conducted logistic regression with participants' ethnicity (0 = White, 1 = non-White), gender (1 = man, 2 = woman), age, income (1 = $0, 7 = $100,000+), and education level (1 = some high school, 6 = graduate degree) as independent variables and knowledge (0 = do not know or did not provide a definition, 1 = did provide a definition) as a dependent variable. None of the variables significantly predicted knowing the definition, Hosmer–Lemeshow $X^2(8, N = 105) = 11.34$, $p = .183$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .04$.

[2] We reported the inter-rater agreement for all of the coded variables and the Cohen's Kappa for exploitation, status, and appropriator. For exchange, dominance, and power the Kappa could not be calculated because there was no variability in coded variables (i.e., all responses were coded with lack of the category).

[3] To examine predictors of whether participants indicated a definition of cultural appropriation in Study 2, we conducted logistic regression with participants' ethnicity (0 = White, 1 = non-White), gender (1 = man, 2 = woman), and age as predictors and whether they provided a definition as the dependent variable. The model was not significant, Hosmer–Lemeshow $X^2(6, N = 330) = 8.35$, $p = .214$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .02$, although gender was a significant predictor, ($B = .65$, $SE = .32$, $p = .043$, odds ratio = 1.92, 95% CI [.102, 3.63])

[4] Based on the data we concluded that the Kappa for exchange and dominance was low despite the high inter-rater agreement of both (98% and 97%) because of the first paradox of Kappa, where the prevalence of the category is based on marginal values. Thus, an imbalance in case distribution renders lower kappa values.

[5] We also examined regressions with gender (0 = man, 1 = woman) and ethnicity (0 = White, 1 = Non-White) predicting the three types of appropriation. Gender and ethnicity did not significantly predict viewing exchange, $F(2, 229) = 0.28$, $p = .753$, $R^2 = .002$, or dominance, $F(2, 229) = 0.02$, $p = .976$, $R^2 < .001$. The regression was significant for exploitation, $F(2, 229) = 3.45$, $p = .034$, $R^2 = .029$, however the betas for gender ($\beta = .13$, $p = .052$) and ethnicity ($\beta = .11$, $p = .087$) were only marginally significant.

Table 1

Frequencies for Types of Appropriation and Power variables for Study 1 (N = 61), Study 2 (N = 220), Study 3 (N = 71)

	Study 1		Study 2		Study 3	
Category	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Exchange[a]	0	0	8	3.6	6	8.5
Dominance[a]	0	0	4	1.8	4	5.6
Exploitation[a]	6	10	33	15	63	88.7
Power[a]	0	0	4	1.8	--	--
Status[a]	6	10	32	14.5	--	--
Appropriator[b]	39	65	118	58.4	60	84.5

Note. [a] The *n* reported is for cases coded with "yes," [b] The *n* reported is for "dominant group member."

Table 2

Examples of Participant Responses for Each Coded Category from Studies 1 and 2

Category	Study 1	Study 2
Exchange	--	Two cultures that come together and trade knowledge of one's culture.
Dominance	--	Expecting or making others conform to the majority.
Exploitation	Cultural appropriation is when one dominant culture adopts aspects of a minority culture for aesthetic or humorous reasons. They adopt something from the culture without respecting it's significance or meaning.	The ideas or actions of a person of one culture (usually a more prominent culture) using an element(s) of another culture as a tread. This has usually been done to marginalized groups that are often persecuted for certain elements on the past.
Power	--	Groups in power taking cultural traditions from minority groups, and not giving credit to the culture from which it was stolen, but is inappropriate.
Status	It describes a phenomenon where one group (usually not a minority) adopts the practices of another (usually a minority) without understanding or bothering to understand their significance. Thus the culture whose practice it was originally no longer is solely associated with it, and it is robbed of its meaning.	When one culture takes a style, phrase, etc. that is typical of another, less privileged culture for the sake of transforming it into something cool/ a profit for the new culture.
Appropriator	Wearing a kimono and you are a white girl who knows nothing about the Asian culture.	If a white student dresses up as an Indian for Halloween and paints his or her face to try to "fit in."

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations between Assessed Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. CA Exchange	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. CA Dominance	.42**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. CA Exploitation	.31**	.53**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4. Political Orientation	-.22**	.07	.30**	--	--	--	--	--	--
5. PC Emotion	-.05	.08	.27**	.35**	--	--	--	--	--
6. PC Activism	-.03	.05	.26**	.35**	.64**	--	--	--	--
7. Social Justice	-.07	-.05	.20**	.13	.31**	.24**	--	--	--
8. Perspective Taking	-.10	-.12	.04	.04	-.03	.04	.56**	--	--
9. Empathic concern	-.05	-.04	.10	.14*	.20**	.12	.68**	.60**	--
Mean	3.24	3.62	4.06	3.98	4.00	3.96	5.83	5.07	5.28
Standard Deviation	2.02	1.19	1.32	1.59	1.46	1.50	1.19	0.89	1.01

Note. CA = cultural appropriation, PC = political correctness, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Canonical Correlation Results

		Function 1	
Variable	Coef	r^2	r_s^2 (%)
Political Orientation	-.758	**-.879**	77.26
PC Emotion	-.178	**-.585**	34.22
PC Activism	-.090	**-.545**	29.70
Social Justice	-.438	**-.509**	25.91
Perspective Taking	-.097	-.239	5.71
Empathy	.230	-.282	7.95
R_c^2			25.33
CA Exchange	.645	.405	16.40
CA Dominance	.188	-.085	0.72
CA Exploitation	-1.03	**-.732**	53.58

Note. Structure coefficients (r_s) greater than an absolute value of .45 are bolded. R_c^2 = squared canonical correlation; Coef = standardized canonical function coefficient; r_s = structure coefficient; r_s^2 = squared structure coefficient.

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